

NOTES ON THE *PEUCÆA RUFICEPS* GROUP,
WITH DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SUBSPECIES.

BY GEORGE B. SENNETT.

A NUMBER of Rufous-crowned Summer Finches recently collected by Mr. Wm. Lloyd in Western Texas, led me to examine into the history of all the forms of the genus with the following results.

After a thorough study of the abundant material in all forms which I have at hand, and a careful analysis of the text of the original describers, it seems to me certain that an error was made in the naming of var. *eremæca* (see Bull. Nuttall Ornith. Club, Vol. VII, Jan. 1882, p. 26) as distinct from *boucardi* (see P. Z. S., 1867, pl. 1. pp. 1, 2).

For the benefit of those not having access to the 'Proceedings' of the Zoölogical Society of London, 1867, I will quote from Mr. Sclater's observations on page 2: "I have had three indifferent skins of this species (collected by M. Botteri, near Orizaba) for several years without being able to identify it satisfactorily. M. Boucard's recent collections having contained excellently prepared examples, I have been enabled to make a better examination of it and to satisfy myself that it is, as far as I can tell, undescribed." Also on same page he gives "*Hab.* in Mexico meridionali, Orizaba (Botteri); La Puebla (Boucard)." Mr. Sclater also labelled the Orizaba specimens "*boucardi*." More than twenty years ago, when very little was known of this group, Mr. Sclater evidently saw that the Orizaba birds were the same as those from La Puebla, and was particular to say so, and to put Orizaba first in the list of localities given as its habitat.

The plate evidently figures the more adult specimen from La Puebla, and the Latin diagnosis does not point particularly to the black shaft lines of the back, which we recognize as distinguishing it from other forms, but otherwise answers the description of the Orizaba specimens as well as the La Puebla ones. Having before me one of the original Orizaba specimens, and adults from La Puebla and the city of Mexico, and also both adults and young from Western Texas, I am decidedly of the opinion that Mr. Sclater's Orizaba specimens of *boucardi* were in the first

year's plumage, *i. e.*, in the plumage before the moult of the second year. Now Mr. Brown's birds, from Kendall Co., Texas, were taken in January, February, and March, and were identical with the Orizaba skin, as stated in his description of *eremæca* referred to above. These birds were undoubtedly immature in plumage, although full-grown. I do not see how the Orizaba bird, described and labelled by Mr. Sclater, can be other than *Zonotrichia* (now *Peucæa*) *boucardi*. There is nothing left therefore but to call *eremæca* a synonym of *boucardi* and extend the latter's habitat to Central Texas. Having before me a great number of specimens of this group, from widely extended localities, I can more thoroughly establish *boucardi*. I am also able to separate the Arizona form from *boucardi*, where it has with doubt and hesitation been placed.

Before giving a full description of each of the three races, I will state comprehensively their characteristics and distribution.

Peucæa ruficeps (Cass.). Small, olive-gray and ferruginous; confined to the Pacific slope.

Peucæa ruficeps boucardi (Scl.). Large, with long bill; dark gray and reddish brown with dark shaft-lines on back; confined to the Gulf slope of Mexico and Texas.

Peucæa ruficeps scottii, subsp. nov. Large, with short, stout bill; light ash and chestnut, without olive or ferruginous, and without black shaft-lines on back; table-lands and mountains of Arizona, New Mexico (?) and Western Texas (?).

I take pleasure in naming this new form for Mr. W. E. D. Scott, in recognition of his excellent work on the ornithology of Arizona.

The two forms *boucardi* and *scottii* seem to meet in that high part of Western Texas that lies between the Pecos and the Rio Grande Rivers. Here the bills of both seem to be blacker, especially on the lower mandible; the wings and tails also seem to be darker brown than in typical specimens of either form.

The three forms of the Rufous-crowned Sparrow may be characterized as follows:—

***Peucæa ruficeps* (Cass.). RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW.**

Adult: Small; upperparts rusty or ferruginous chestnut, the edgings of the feathers olive-gray. This rusty chestnut of back usually takes, in prepared skins, the form of long and broad streaks showing no dark shaft-lines. Tail rufous. Six adult males average: wing, 2.30; tail, 2.58; culmen, .43; tarsus, .75 inch.

Habitat. Pacific slope (California).

***Peucæa ruficeps boucardi* (Scl.). BOUCARD'S SPARROW.**

Adult: Larger in every part than *ruficeps*. The crown patch alone of the upperparts is dark chestnut, and is more restricted than in *ruficeps*. The strongly marked edgings of the feathers gives the dorsal region a brownish gray appearance. The centre of these feathers is brown, and the shaft-lines are dark and more or less conspicuous; very old and much worn specimens have only traces of dark shaft-lines. Tail and wings brown, edged with rufous. There is none of that rusty appearance which predominates in *ruficeps*; sometimes traces of olive are noticed on the gray of back.

Young: Similar to adult, but without any reddish brown on back, though with black shaft-lines, thus giving the upperparts a dark gray appearance with black streaks.

Twelve adult males average: wing, 2.62; tail, 3.02; culmen, .50; tarsus, .81 inch. Females have wings and tails a little smaller.

Habitat. Eastern Mexico (heights of Vera Cruz, Orizaba, Puebla, and City of Mexico) and Texas (Kendall and Presidio Counties).

***Peucæa ruficeps scottii*, subsp. nov. SCOTT'S SPARROW.**

Adult: Large; tail averaging half an inch longer than in *ruficeps*; bill short and stout, but little if any larger than in *ruficeps*, and darker. Upper parts pale chestnut, edged very finely on crown but more strongly on dorsal region with light ash. No dark shaft-lines. The edgings are not so heavy as in *ruficeps*, and being of pale ash rather than of olive-gray, give this form an ashy brown rather than a ferruginous appearance. This same light ashy brown effect is plainly shown when compared with the dark gray and black shaft-lines of *boucardi*. This narrow edging of the feathers gives the back a mottled rather than a streaked effect, as seen both in *ruficeps* and *boucardi*. Underparts paler than in either *ruficeps* or *boucardi*. Tail and wings brown edged with rufous. Fall and winter specimens of young of the year are darker, and the chestnut of back is redder and more in streaks.

Young: Streaked above with reddish brown and gray. Below ash, lightly streaked with black, the lines being most pronounced upon the breast. There is a slight wash of tawny on breast, sides, flanks, and under tail-coverts.

I give two specimens as types: (1) No. 5247, collection of G. B. Sennett, collected by W. E. D. Scott, Pinal Co., Arizona, March 27, 1885. Collector's No. 1979. Wing, 2.72; tail, 3.20; culmen, .44; tarsus, .32 inch.

(2) Collection of American Museum, collector's No. 1884, collected by W. E. D. Scott, Pinal Co., Arizona, March 14, 1885. Wing, 2.65; tail, 3.15; culmen, .43; tarsus, .84.

Thirty-two males average: wing, 2.63; tail, 3.08; culmen, .45; tarsus, .81. Eleven females average: wing, 2.51; tail, 2.96; culmen, .445; tarsus, .81.

Habitat. Highlands of Arizona. New Mexico (Silver Springs)? and Western Texas (Presidio and Mitchell Counties)?